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An Exploration of the Relationships Between Self-Efficacy and Personality, Coherence, Occupational Stress, Burnout, Community Seetings Among Probation Officers

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine relation between self-efficacy and personality, sense of coherence, stress, burnout, and community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams as well as work experience, age, number of reviews and number of cases. The results of the own study revealed that all the Big Five personality traits are related to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy indeed highly correlates with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. The levels of perceived self-efficacy is determined by factors such as age, work experience, the quantity of reviews carried out, and current responsibilities. With the growing number of cases, the level of self-efficacy decreases. One's level of self-efficacy increases with age and work experience. On the basis of the obtained results, it can be clearly seen that, apart from personal factors, there are more factors that condition levels of perceived self-efficacy. Community settings in probation/bailiff teams played an important role; correlation coefficients, although low, turned out to be significant.

Keywords: self-efficacy of probation officers, self-efficacy, probation officers in Poland.

1. Theoretical context

The term *self-efficacy*, first used by Bandura, refers to the capability to exercise control over certain events or, in other words, belief in one's efficacy in certain situations or when approaching specific tasks. According to Bandura, perceived self-efficacy influences the way in which people approach tasks, the degree to which they are engrossed in tasks, and their emotional reaction when they find themselves in unique situations or attempt to foresee specific situations. Bandura claims that people behave differently when they are assured of their skills and abilities compared to when they feel unsure and incompetent. Self-efficacy influences one's thought patterns, motivation, and emotional arousal. Bandura and Cervone analyzed the influence of goals and feedback on motivation. According to them, 'simply adopting goals, whether easy or personally challenging ones, without knowing how one is doing seems to have no appreciable motivational effects'. Therefore, only goals with feedback enhanced the level of motivation. Pervin and John posited that 'perceived self-efficacy may influence making effort and taking action to such an extent that it will level out huge differences in skills'. Perceived self-efficacy also influences personal goals: the higher the level of perceived self-efficacy, the more demanding the goals. Moreover, perceived self-efficacy influences one's perseverance in pursuing a goal, as people with high levels of perceived self-efficacy tend to put more effort in achieving goals than people with low levels of perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is linked to the emotional sphere: people with a high degree of perceived self-efficacy are characterized by good emotional states and low levels of anxiety and depression when pursuing goals. People whose level of perceived self-efficacy is high perform better at stress management than people whose level of perceived self-efficacy is low.

According to Bandura, a person may draw knowledge about their self-efficacy from the following sources:

- mastery experiences; successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy, failures undermine motivation,
- vicarious experiences,
- verbal persuasion,

• physiological and affective states accompanying the actions people take.

No research on perceived self-efficacy of probation officers has thus far been conducted. Therefore, the results presented below concern perceived self-efficacy measured among representatives of other professional groups.

Perceived self-efficacy and job burnout

A study conducted by Schwarzer and Halum with a group of 1203 German and Syrian teachers demonstrated that teachers with low levels of general self-efficacy more often experienced job stress that preceded burnout. According to the research, strengthening teachers' optimistic self-beliefs, along with improved teaching skills, would be a preventive measure to avoid job strain and burnout.

In his research, Betoret examined the relationship between school resources, teacher self-efficacy, stressors, and teacher burnout. The research was conducted with primary and secondary school teachers. The sample was composed of 724 Spanish primary and secondary school teachers. Analysis of the results by means of structural equation modelling revealed a relationship between external and internal coping resources and stress. Correlations between external (school support resources) coping, stress, and internal (self-efficacy) coping resources were negative, which means that higher self-efficacy and more substantial resources support lower job stressors. These results correspond with results obtained through earlier research on the relationship between self-efficacy, stress, and burnout confirmed by Brouwers, Chan, Brouwers, Friedman and Van Dick & Wagner.

Self-efficacy and stress

Many researchers have examined the mutual dependence of self-efficacy and stress among students. Results have revealed negative correlations (moderate and strong) between the two variables confirmed by Gigliotti & Huff, Solberg, Hale, Villarreal & Kavanagh, Solberg & Villarreal and Torres & Solberg.

Research carried out by Hackett et al. showed that perceived stress and self-efficacy were found to be the strongest predictors of college academic achievement. High grades depended on high levels of self-efficacy and low levels of perceived stress.

Pintrich and De Groot conducted research with younger students. The results showed that both test anxiety and self-efficacy were related to academic performance in English classes; however, self-efficacy was a stronger predictor.

Torres and Solberg, however, only concurred that perceived self-efficacy was a predictor when it comes to academic performance; stress, on the other hand, was not reported to be as such.

An experiment conducted with college students, which involved a programme for decreasing rates of school dropout, showed that building self-efficacy and managing stress significantly increased participants' grades and decreased the dropout rate compared with the control group, which was only taught learning skills.

Jerusalem and Mittag conducted research with immigrants from East Germany. Their perceived self-efficacy had a strong impact on all aspects of adaptation processes analyzed in the research. Immigrants with high levels of perceived self-efficacy tended to interpret demands more as challenges than as threats. Immigrants with high levels of self-efficacy had less distressing experiences and health problems than individuals characterized by low levels of perceived efficacy.

Self-efficacy and personality

Cellar et al. investigated the relationship between personality and self-efficacy. The results indicated that self-efficacy was correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. In another research results self-efficacy beliefs are also associated with personality traits including neuroticism and conscientiousness. Agreeableness and social self-efficacy ratings were significantly correlated. Self-efficacy was negatively associated with neuroticism and positively associated with the remaining personality traits, whereas caregiver strain was positively associated with neuroticism and negatively associated with agreeableness.

2. Methods

The present research aims to define the relationship between perceived self-efficacy of probation officers and independent variables such as personality, sense of coherence, stress, burnout, and community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams. Furthermore, a correlation

between such variables as gender, work experience, marital status, place of residence, and profession was established. The research problem was specified: what is relation between such variables as personality, sense of coherence, stress, burnout, and community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams and perceived self-efficacy among probation officers? The following hypothesis were formed on the basis of research on perceived self-efficacy and its determinants: perceived self-efficacy is determined by personality, sense of coherence, stress, burnout, and community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams.

In order to verify the hypotheses, the following tools were adopted: General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE scale), Strength Burnout Scale, Sources of Work Stress Inventory, NEO-PI-R, Short Assessment of Community Settings in Probation Officer/Bailiff Teams (SACS), SOC-29 questionnaire, and a survey.

The Strength Burnout Scale (SBS)

Due to reservations regarding the reliability of the Polish adaptation of the MBI Burnout Inventory authored by Maslach, the present study makes use of the Strength Burnout Scale developed by Steuden and Okła. According to the latter 'the theoretical basis for the construction of the scale came as the concept of stress arising from professional activity of persons providing assistance to patients, results of authors' own empirical (pilot) research in the scope of stressors related to performed profession, as well as the experienced symptoms of the burnout syndrome' (translated from Polish). The scale consists of 66 questions measuring 5 variable components of professional burnout: decreased emotional control, loss of subjective involvement, decreased operational effectiveness, limitation of interpersonal contacts, and physical fatigue. The reliability of the scale was determined with the application of internal consistency, Cronbach's α coefficient for the entire scale = 0.95; the explained variance percentage for the 5 isolated factors was: decreased emotional control – 12.48; loss of subjective involvement – 8.66; decreased operational effectiveness – 6.28; limitation of interpersonal contacts – 5.39; and for the fatigue it was – 4.48. The tool's theoretical accuracy was also examined with the use of factor analysis, which demonstrated the existence of five factors. Theorems qualified for the experimental version of the scale where the theorems with the factor load value: ranging from .48 to .69 for decreased emotional control; from .42 to .65 for loss of subjective involvement; from .41 to .56 for decreased operational effectiveness; from .42 to .56 for limitation of interpersonal contacts; and from .42 to .61 for physical fatigue.

Inventory of Sources of Stress in Probation Officers (ISS)

The Inventory of Sources of Stress in Probation Officers tool was developed by Skowroński. The reliability of the Inventory of Sources of Stress was calculated by estimating internal consistency and absolute stability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire inventory was α = 0.93. Coefficients for individual subscales identified by applying the Exploratory Factor Analysis were: lack of understanding in the team and inappropriate atmosphere α = 0.91; inconsistencies and ambiguity connected with the discharge of professional duties α = 0.88; factors impeding development and course of professional career α = 0.86; lack of security and substantive support α = 0.80; supervision activities and inadequate physical working conditions α = 0.79; inappropriate reactions of wards α = 0.88; and lack of possibility to express opinions on systemic solutions α = 0.73. All internal consistency coefficients attest to the reliability of both the entire Inventory of Sources of Stress in Probation Officers as well as all seven subscales. To estimate the absolute stability of the inventory, a group of 110 subjects was tested twice within a three-week interval. Both measurements were correlated with each other. The correlation coefficients range from 0.56 (moderate correlation, substantial relationship) to 0.92 (very high correlation, very certain relationship). Considering the value of correlation coefficients, one may conclude that the Inventory of Sources of Stress in Probation Officers is characterized by absolute stability.

Short Assessment of Community Settings in Probation Officer/Bailiff Teams (SACS)

Research concerning Short Assessment of Community Settings in Probation Officer/Bailiff Teams began in autumn 2011. The reason for creating a new scale was the need to design an accurate and a reliable tool that probation officers appointed by district courts could apply in assessing community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams subject to them. The scale measures atmosphere, team support and leadership. The reliability and validity of the SACS was confirmed. Reliability of the scale was achieved through its internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha

measure result for the entire scale was 0.91. The results for the subscales obtained in the factor analysis were the following: atmosphere – 0.87, team support – 0.83, and leadership – 0.77.

The validity of the scale was estimated through content validity and construct validity. The group of 41 probation officers was presented with the new definition of community settings: interpersonal relations taken as a whole and interpersonal relations between the members of the probation officer/bailiff team. Favorable community settings consist of elements such as interpersonal relations between members of a team, openness to criticism and other points of view, the possibility to speak freely in front of the team, mutual respect and understanding, atmosphere, and support. Unfavorable community settings consist of the opposite factors. Experts were asked to take a stance on the questions of whether these factors are representative of the definition of community settings.

The minimum content validity ratio (CVR) varies according to the number of probation officers. In this case, the group comprised 41 respondents. Lawshe states that in the case of a group comprising 40 probation officers, the minimum CVR value is 0.29. Only one item did not meet the minimum; however, it was retained in the scale due to its discriminating power, as well as since its rejection would cause a slight decrease in the internal consistency score.

Factor analysis revealed 3 factors. The cumulative percentage of the variance expressed by the three factors was 68.54, i.e., almost 70%.

Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R)

Costa and McCrae developed the test. It is an inventory for measuring the Big Five personality domains. The inventory also measures the facets that define each personality domain.

The inventory consists of 240 items answered on a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Questions concern the Big Five personality traits and their unique aspects (facets): neuroticism (anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability); extraversion (warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions); openness (fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values); agreeableness (trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness); and conscientiousness (competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation). The results can be interpreted for scales and subscales. The reliability and validity of the NEO was confirmed. Inventory reliability was estimated through internal consistency of each scale and facet. For the rest the reliability of the scales ranged between α=.81 (for agreeableness) and α=.85 or α=.86.

The validity of the inventory was estimated by means of factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation). The model explained 56% of variance. Factor matrix data showed full correlation between facets and factor structure in terms of openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The impulsiveness facet included in neuroticism is characterized by low factor loading. The angry hostility facet is linked with positive N and negative A. In the remaining facets, N achieves the highest values, as was expected. Assertiveness (the facet of extraversion) has a slightly higher negative A value, and lower positive E and lower negative N values. Positive emotions (facet of extraversion) achieved the highest positive E and O values.

Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)

The Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) was developed by Ralf Schwarzer, Michael Jerusalem, and Zygfryd Juczyński. It refers to Bandura's concepts of expectations and personal efficacy. Expectations of personal efficacy here refer to the control of one's actions. GSES consists of 10 questions. It was used in 21 countries until 1998. GSES is a valid and reliable tool.

In order to define the reliability of the scale, its internal consistency was measured. For the entire scale, α=.85; the correlation coefficient in test-retest (with a five-week interval) was 0.78.

Scale validity was estimated by comparing GSES with several criteria related to the concept of self-perceived abilities. The Polish version of GSES has a weaker correlation with Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) in measuring dispositional optimism and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale than the original version (RSES). Perceived self-efficacy is related to optimism, self-acceptance, and high self-esteem. Strong dependence correlates with internal locus of health control and intensified health behavior. Moreover, GSES has a uniform structure. The model explained 44 % of variance.

Life Orientation Test-Revised scale

LOT-R was designed by Antonovsky. It consists of 29 questions and measures 3 dimensions of the sense of coherence: manageability, meaningfulness, and comprehensibility. The reliability and validity of the LOT-R was confirmed. The reliability of the scale was measured by estimating its internal consistency, i.e., by means of Cronbach's alpha measure with the score ranging between 0.84 and 0.93. Validity was measured by LOT-R, which adopted Rumbaut's sense of coherence scale. Correlation between the two scales was 0.639. Congruent and discriminant validities were measured. As was expected, positive correlation occurred between LOT-R and a scale developed by Rotter for evaluating locus of control. The correlation coefficient was 0.385. LOT-R also correlates with fear. Correlation coefficient between LOT-R and Sarason's test anxiety was -0.212. As the state of health deteriorated, the percentage of respondents who belonged to the group with the best health condition dropped from 33 to 12 (Antonovsky, 2005).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed by the author of this paper comprised basic socio-demographic factors such as: age, profession, gender, work experience, marital status, education, number of cases, place of residence, and number of reviews conducted in the past year.

Group

The examined group comprised 300 respondents () who were probation officers carrying out decisions in criminal cases and cases involving minors given by district courts in Warsaw, Warsaw-Praga, Włocławek, Sieradz, and Bydgoszcz. The table below presents data concerning the examined group.

Table 1. Characteristics of the examined group

Variables	N/%
sex% women men	 223/74.3 77/25.7
age in years (M/SD)	40.8 ±7.03
marital status % married divorced widowed unmarried cohabiting	 223/74.3 18/6.0 12/4.0 38/12.7 9/3.0
service period (M/SD)	13.4 ±7.48
occupation % probation officers for adult offenders family probation officers	 230/76.7 70/23.3

A total of 74.3 % of the group were women (n=223) and 25.7 % were men (n=77). The average age of the group was 40 years old. In total, 74.3 % of the respondents (n=223) were married, 6 % (n=18) were divorced, 4 % (n=12) were widowed, 12.7 % (n=38) were single, and 3 % (n=9) were in an informal relationship. The average work experience was 13 years. More than 76.7 % of the respondents (n=230) carried out decisions in criminal cases; 23.3 % (n=70) carried out decisions in family and minors cases.

3. Results

The analysis will start from the presentation of correlation between perceived self-efficacy and selected factors measured with Pearson-*r*. Secondly, the paper will present the analysis of relationship between burnout and its strongest correlatives by means of structural modelling.

Self-efficacy and personality

Due to many studies showing relationship between personality and self-efficacy, this paper adopted the five major domains of personality. The results of the research showed that self-efficacy is correlated with all the domains. In the case of correlation with neuroticism and conscientiousness the correlation is moderate and dependence is strong. The correlation coefficient between self-efficacy and neuroticism is negative, and between self-efficacy and conscientiousness is positive.

Table 3. Relationship between perceived self-efficacy among probation officers and the Big Five

	neuroticism	extroversion	openness	agreeableness	conscientiousness
GSES total score	-.533**	.303**	.196**	.183**	.448**

** p < 0.01

Correlations between self-efficacy and extraversion, openness and agreeableness are positive, low, but clear. The results showed that people with high levels of perceived self-efficacy are conscientious, extrovert, open, and agreeable. Furthermore, the higher the level of neuroticism, the lower the perceived level of self-efficiency among probation officers. Relationship between perceived self-efficacy among probation officers and the personality dimensions measured by the NEO PI-R are showed below.

Table 4. Relationship between perceived self-efficacy among probation officers and the personality dimensions measured by the NEO PI-R

	Neuroticism					
GSES total score	Anxiety	Hostility	Depression	Self-consciousness	Impulsiveness	Vulnerability to Stress
	-,345**	-,393**	-,438**	-,330**	-,292**	-,631**
	Extraversion					
	Warmth	Gregariousness	Assertiveness	Activity	Excitement Seeking	Positive Emotion
	,298**	,170**	,198**	,340**	,029	,256**
	Openness to experience					
	Fantasy	Aesthetics	Feelings	Actions	Ideas	Values
	-,097	,152	,115	,270**	,213**	,074
	Agreeableness					
	Trust	Straightforwardness	Altruism	Compliance	Modesty	Tendermindedness
	,299**	,083	,282**	,145*	-,133*	-,008
	Conscientiousness					
	Competence	Order	Dutifulness	Achievement Striving	Self-Discipline	Deliberation
	,486**	,284**	,273**	,381**	,468**	,070

** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

The most strongest correlations revealed between perceived self-efficacy and depression (r=-.438,p<.01); competence (r=.486,p<.01) and self-discipline (r=.468,p<.01).

Self-efficacy and burnout

Perceived self-efficacy is closely related to burnout. Decreased employee effectiveness is considered one of the indicators of burnout. Table 2 presents correlation coefficients between perceived self-efficacy and burnout indicators, i.e., decreased emotional control, loss of personal commitment, decreased effectiveness, limitation of interpersonal relations, and physical fatigue.

Table 2. Self-efficacy and burnout

	decreased emotional control	loss of subjective involvement		decreased operational effectiveness	limitation of interpersonal personal contacts	physical fatigue,	total score SBS
GSES total score	-.418**	-.353**		-.475**	-.341**	-.416**	-.454**

** p < 0.01

All the scores have negative values. Correlation coefficient ranged between -0.341 (correlation between self-efficacy and limitation of interpersonal relations) and -0.475 (correlation between self-efficacy and decrease in effectiveness of acting). Correlation values are either low (slight but clear correlation) or moderate (strong dependence). Self-efficacy is then conditioned by burnout.

Self-efficiency and sense of coherence

According to Antonovsky, sense of coherence is 'a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic, feeling of confidence that one's internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can reasonably be expected'. Therefore, people with high levels of perceived self-efficacy can meet the demands. Theoretically, it should be expected that coherent people are characterized by high levels of perceived self-efficacy. This conclusion, however, is not supported by studies conducted with a group of probation officers. This was the reason for including the sense of coherence among self-efficacy correlatives. However, a relationship between sense of coherence and burnout was demonstrated. Correlation between self-efficacy and sense of coherence is presented in Table 4.

Table 5. Correlation coefficients between self-efficacy and sense of coherence

	comprehensibility	manageability	meaningfulness	total score LOT-R
GSES total score	.440**	.431**	.459**	.501**

** p < 0.01

All the correlations were positive, moderate, and strongly dependent. People with high sense of internal coherence have high levels of perceived self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy and age, work experience, number of reviews, and number of cases.

The table below presents Pearson correlation coefficients between self-efficacy, age, work experience, number of reviews, and number of cases. Almost all correlations, except the correlation

between self-efficacy and the number of reviews, are significant. Coefficients range between .141 (correlation between self-efficacy and work experience) and .193 (correlation between self-efficacy and age). The more extensive the work experience, the higher the level of perceived self-efficacy; the older the probation officer, the higher the level of perceived self-efficacy.

Table 6. Self-efficacy and age, work experience, number of reviews, and number of cases.

	age	work experience	number of reviews	number of cases
GSES total score	.193**	.141*	ns	-.142*

** p < 0.01
* p < 0.05

Moreover, the correlation between self-efficacy and the number of cases was negative, which means that level of perceived self-efficacy increases as the number of cases decreases, and vice versa. In every case the correlation is weak, almost insignificant, but important. Against the expectations, age, work experience, number of reviews (except the number of cases) were the main correlatives in the level of perceived self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy and stress

Work Stress Inventory measures stressors connected with or resulting from the lack of communication on a team, unfavorable atmosphere at work, divergence and confusion connected with discharging professional duties, factors impeding development and course of professional career, insecurity and lack of factual support, controls, unsatisfactory work conditions, inappropriate reactions of the charges, and impossibility of addressing systemic problems. Additionally, an overall score of the inventory is measured. A correlation between the accumulation of stressors and perceived self-efficacy was expected. The researchers agree that burnout is the body's reaction to stress. It was confirmed by Schaufeli, Van Dierendonck and Van Grp, Hart and Maslach. Self-efficacy is not only connected with the decrease in effectiveness of acting, but also is a burnout indicator. Therefore, stress was also considered to be a correlative of perceived self-efficacy. The higher the indicator values on the scale, the higher the levels of stress.

Table 7. Correlation coefficients between self-efficacy and stress

	lack of understanding in the team and inappropriate atmosphere	inconsistencies and ambiguity connected with the discharge of professional duties	factors impeding development and course of professional career	lack of security and substantive support	supervision activities and inadequate physical working conditions	inappropriate reactions of wards	lack of possibility to express opinions on systemic solutions	total score (ISS)
GSES total score	-.177**	ns	-.138*	ns	-.173**	-127*	-.136*	-.194**

** p < 0.01
* p < 0.05

In addition to correlations between self-efficacy, divergence, and confusion connected with discharging professional duties as well as insecurity and lack of factual support, significant negative correlations also emerged. It has been observed that increased levels of self-efficacy go along with decreased stress resulting from lack of communication and unfavorable atmosphere, factors impeding the development and course of professional career, controls, unsatisfactory work conditions, inappropriate reactions of the charges, and the impossibility of addressing systemic change. Correlation coefficient values were low.

Self-efficacy and community settings in probation/bailiff teams

Thus, research was not being conducted on the relation between community settings in probation/bailiff teams and self-efficacy. Such a relationship was believed to exist since community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams was a component of broadly understood professional support. The role of a supervisor is to increase the work effectiveness of supervisees. The demand for supervisors among Polish probation officers is huge; this was presented in a study. In Poland, probation officers affected by burnout have not had the opportunity to work under supervision. Community setting is an element of professional support that is created by members of probation officer/bailiff teams. It is independent of the governing bodies. Peer support seems particularly important in this profession.

Table 8. Correlation coefficients between self-efficacy and community settings on probation/bailiff teams

	atmosphere	team support	leadership	total score SACS
GSES total score	-.117*	-125*	ns	-124*

* $p < 0.05$

Short Assessment of Community Settings consists of the atmosphere on the team, team support, and style of leadership. An overall score representing the sum of the three factors is calculated. A high score means unfavorable community settings.

The values of the coefficients (except for the correlation between self-efficacy and style of leadership) are significant, negative, and range between -.117 and -.125, which is low; the correlation is almost insignificant. The higher the score (meaning unfavorable community settings), the lower the level of perceived self-efficacy. Despite the fact that the values are low, they are important.

Model of relationship between self-efficacy and other variables.

The model consists of one endogenous variable, which is the overall GSES score, and four exogenous variables: sense of coherence, conscientiousness, neuroticism, burnout, and the number of cases. The model was relevant, which can be seen in the RMSEA value (the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) which was .066, ($\chi^2(4)$ 9.141, $p>.05$), Hoelter N=311, as well as fit indices: NFI=.984, CFI=.991. The model explained 38% of the variances of dependent variable, i.e., level of perceived self-efficacy.

Figure 1 shows only the direct influence. It was impossible to create a model that would include indirect influence.

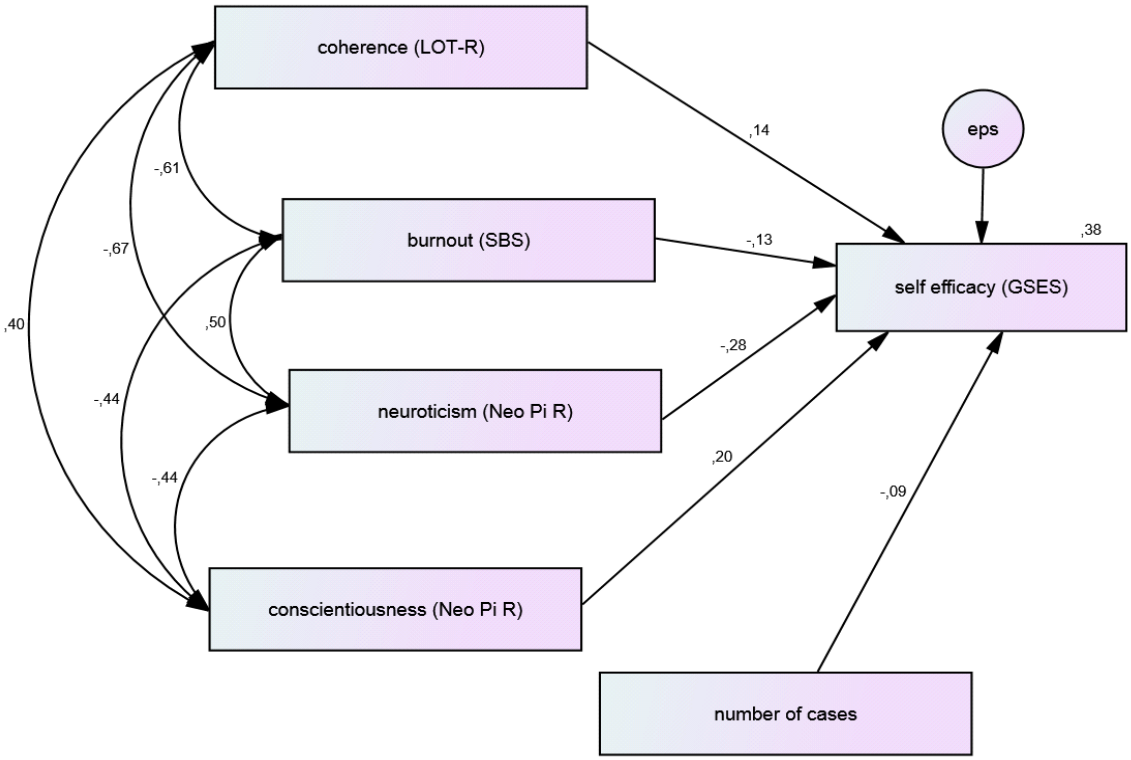

Fig. 1. Model of relationship between self-efficacy and neuroticism, sense of coherence, burnout, and the number of cases, RMSEA=.066, $\chi^2(4)$ 9.141, Hoelter N=311, NFI=.984, CFI=.991 (source: own study).

As the value of conscientiousness increases by one unit, the value of self-efficacy increases by .20 units. Therefore, the level of self-efficacy increases with the level of conscientiousness.

Increasing neuroticism by one unit causes a decrease of self-efficacy by .28 units. The higher the level of neuroticism, the lower the level of perceived self-efficacy.

In the case when the sense of coherence increases by one unit, the burnout indicator increases by .14 units. This is the case of positive dependence: the higher the level of sense of coherence, the higher the level of perceived self-efficacy.

When the burnout value increases by one unit, then self-efficacy decreases by .13 units, which means that the higher the level of perceived self-efficacy, the lower the burnout.

The value of correlations between the exogenic variables is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Estimates of relationship between the variables in the model.

			Estimate
neuroticism	<-->	conscientiousness	-.440
burnout	<-->	conscientiousness	-.443
conscientiousness	<-->	sense of coherence	.398
burnout	<-->	neuroticism	.503
burnout	<-->	sense of coherence	-.605
neuroticism	<-->	sense of coherence	-.674

(source: own study)

The sense of coherence, understood as internal coherence, correlates negatively with burnout and neuroticism and positively with conscientiousness. People characterized as coherent have lower burnout and lower levels of neuroticism. Conscientious people have lower levels of neuroticism and burnout. The higher the level of neuroticism, the higher the level of burnout.

4. Discussion

Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio proved that higher self-efficacy makes it more likely that individuals will succeed at challenging tasks. Self-efficacy focus on goal-directed thought and behavior and situation-specific goals.

The aim of the study was to examine relation between self-efficacy and personality, sense of coherence, stress, burnout, and community settings in probation officer/bailiff teams as well as work experience, age, number of reviews and number of cases.

All the Big Five personality traits are related to self-efficacy. Furthermore, the results of a study conducted by Cellar et al. were confirmed. Self-efficacy indeed highly correlates with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. People with high levels of perceived self-efficacy can be characterized as conscientious, extrovert, open, and agreeable. People with high levels of neuroticism have low levels of perceived self-efficacy.

The levels of perceived self-efficacy are determined by factors such as age, work experience, the quantity of reviews carried out, and current responsibilities. This hypothesis proved to be only partially true. Current responsibilities affect self-efficacy. With the growing number of cases, the level of self-efficacy decreases. One's level of self-efficacy increases with age and work experience. The number of reviews turned out to be an insignificant factor. This proposal constitutes the basis for the revision of the Polish system of probation, where, for many years, the number of cases per one professional curator is over 150, in the period from 2005 to 2008, this number was more than 300. Compared with the Polish curators, curators Australian lead of about 30 cases. A system in which on one curator for as much as 150 cases may not be effective.

The results of own studies coincide with the results of studies with Syrian and German teachers conducted by Schwarzer and Halum. Their research proved that teachers with low levels of perceived self-efficacy are more prone to job stress, and then burnout. The study conducted with probation officers revealed significant negative correlations. Self-efficacy increases as the levels of stress decrease due to lack of communication on a team and unfavorable atmosphere, factors impeding the development and course of professional career, controls, unsatisfactory work conditions, inappropriate reactions of the charges, and the inability to address systemic change. A contrary situation occurred in the correlation between self-efficacy, divergence, and confusion connected with discharging professional duties, as well as insecurity and lack of factual support. The correlations are significant; however, their value is low. Results of the research to date have to a certain extent been confirmed by Betoret, Friedman, Van Dick & Wagner, Brouwers et al., Brouwers, Chan although they concerned professional groups other than probation officers. Is can be stated that the correlation between stress and self-efficacy is not characteristic of just one profession, especially because this relationship occurred in other groups, e.g., students – confirmed by Torres & Solberg, Barrios, Solberg & Villarreal, Gigliotti & Huff, Solberg, Hale, Villarreal & Kavanagh, Hackett et al.; school pupils – confirmed by Pintrich & De Groot, and immigrants – confirmed by Jerusalem & Mittag.

The results of this study confirms research results of Law and Guo, because the probation officers' degree of self-efficacy was found to be significantly related to their job stress. A work in a correctional institution is stressful. Probation officers in Poland with higher self-efficacy would have less job stress. In studies of Chuang et al. and Skaalvik & Skaalvik, the level of self-efficacy was not found to be significantly associated with job stress. Further study is needed for clarification of possible influences underlying this result.

On the basis of the obtained results, it can be clearly seen that, apart from personal factors, there are more factors that condition levels of perceived self-efficacy. Community settings in probation/bailiff teams played an important role; correlation coefficients, although low, turned out to be significant.

In the Polish system of probation, probation officers are not provided with supervision, which plays an important role for the self-efficacy. This solution is essential and necessary. According to Bandura and Cervone only goals with feedback enhanced the level of motivation.

One of the primary objectives of supervision is to give feedback. It can therefore be expected that supervision affects the effectiveness of probation. Undoubtedly, it is in the interest of every country to have an efficient, effective and professionally operating team of probation officers/guardians, as court probation services are extremely important in social control. The introduction of supervision in terms of probation officers/guardians should be considered. Offering assistance in the form of psychological support, which should be a standard procedure, should also be considered. Support for probation officers/guardians should be an element of social support.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study, especially the personality variables, should be taken into account when interviewing candidates applying for the position of a probation officer. Candidates accepted for the position should have low level of neuroticism and high levels of conscientiousness and internal coherence.

For further studies, the author recommends adding qualitative measurement, such as face-to-face interviews, for more precise observation to enhance the accuracy of the data.

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